

DAILY BULLETIN

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BUSH ENLISTS FORMER PRESIDENTS IN TSUNAMI RELIEF AID EFFORT

Says devastation from the tsunami disaster “defies comprehension”

By Stephen Kaufman

Washington File White House Correspondent

Washington -- President Bush has enlisted the aid of his predecessors, Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush, to solicit funds for Indian Ocean tsunami disaster relief.

“I ask every American to contribute as they are able to do so,” Bush said, after speaking with the former presidents at the White House January 3.

Estimates of the death toll from the disaster now stand as high as 150,000, according to international aid agencies. Besides the dead, more than 5 million people are believed to be homeless or without access to food and shelter, with millions vulnerable to disease. The devastation, Bush said, “defies comprehension.”

The U.S. government has made an initial \$350 million commitment for relief efforts and has deployed military assets to help with recovery efforts and to aid distribution. Bush said U.S. C-130 aircraft are flying aid missions around the clock, and aircraft from the Abraham Lincoln carrier group are transporting relief supplies off the coast of Indonesia.

More U.S. military assets are expected to arrive to help generate clean water and provide further logistical help, the president said.

"We're showing the compassion of our nation in the swift response. But the greatest source of America's generosity is not our government, it's the good heart of the American people," Bush said.

He said relief organizations have reported an outpouring of generosity from around the world, and said private citizens have contributed millions of dollars for disaster relief and reconstruction in the first week after the disaster.

The president said the two former presidents will be asking Americans to make cash contributions to reliable charities which are already providing relief to tsunami victims and which, he said, "have an in-depth understanding of the resources required to meet the needs on the ground."

Clinton and George H. W. Bush will likely be giving media interviews and traveling across the United States to encourage both private and corporate giving, according to White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan.

The effort by the two former presidents will bring a greater focus on the need to support nongovernmental organizations in their relief efforts, McClellan said.

"We want to make sure we are doing everything we can, both from the government perspective as well as private support, to help those who are suffering and those who are in need." The press secretary added that President Bush intends to make a private contribution himself.

In his remarks, Bush praised what he described as "innovative" efforts by Americans to raise money for disaster relief, including the donation of sales proceeds, tax assistance, and corporate matching for employee cash contributions.

"Some people are selling personal items on the Internet and donating the cash to the charities," Bush said.

President Bush, who arrived in Washington from Crawford, Texas, January 2, also visited the embassies of Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand with the two former presidents to sign condolence books and meet with ambassadors. He has directed U.S. flags to fly at half-staff to honor the victims.

At the Indian Embassy, Bush thanked the government of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for taking a lead in organizing relief efforts in the region. He said U.S. and

Indian naval forces, as well as search and rescue teams, are coordinating their relief and rescue efforts.

Speaking at the Embassy of Indonesia, the president said he looks forward to working with Indonesian authorities to provide food, medicine, water and shelter to disaster victims "so that the great country of Indonesia can rise up from this disaster and provide the hope necessary for the people of that important country."

A U.S. delegation led by Secretary of State Colin Powell and Florida Governor Jeb Bush arrived in the region January 3 to meet with government officials and international organizations to assess relief efforts now under way, as well as long-term needs.

"Secretary Powell and Governor Bush will report their findings directly to me so we can ensure that our government provides the most effective assistance possible," Bush said.

The president directed Americans to find information on making donations at the USA Freedom Corps web site (<http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov/>).

"As men and women across the devastated region begin to rebuild, we offer our sustained compassion and our generosity and our assurance that America will be there to help," Bush said.

A transcript of Bush's remarks is available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/01/20050103-12.html>

U.S. ROLE IN TSUNAMI RELIEF EXPANDS: AN OVERVIEW

Military, aid agencies describe efforts for disaster victims so far

Washington -- As the Asian death toll from the Indian Ocean tsunami approached 150,000, President Bush has enlisted his two predecessors to solicit private U.S. contributions for relief.

The president said in January 3 remarks that former presidents Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush will be asking Americans make cash contributions to reliable

charities that are already providing relief to tsunami victims. [Bush Enlists Former Presidents in Tsunami Relief Aid Effort]

The U.S. government has made an initial \$350 million commitment for official relief and has deployed military units assets to help with recovery distribute aid.

While more U.S. military assets are expected to arrive to help generate clean water and provide further logistical help, the president said, disaster victims can expect even more help from private U.S. charities.

“We’re showing the compassion of our nation in the swift response,” Bush said. “But the greatest source of America’s generosity is not our government; it’s the good heart of the American people.” [Private Citizens, Corporations Giving to Tsunami Relief]

President Bush, his father and Clinton visited the embassies of India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand to sign condolence books.

At a briefing shortly after the president’s remarks officials of the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Defense Department described how their agencies were working continuously to assess relief needs while getting supplies into the region and distributing them to the neediest disaster victims. [Assessment, Transport, Distribution Focus of U.S. Relief Effort]

They estimated that 3 million to 5 million people in 12 countries around the Indian Ocean were directly affected by the December 26 tsunami, many of them now homeless.

Following are some of their main points:

- USAID has 135 personnel and the U.S. military has three teams in the region assessing the scope of the disaster.
- The USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group is in the region and supporting humanitarian relief operations with 19 helicopters.
- An Expedition Strike Group led by the USS Bonhomme Richard with 24 helicopters will arrive in the region within several days.
- The U.S. Air Force has sent 17 C-130 cargo planes to the region to ferry in relief supplies.
- Air Force cargo planes have delivered 430,000 pounds of relief supplies to the region since December 26.
- U.S. military helicopters are bringing in supplies to

remote regions and helping bring out sick and injured survivors.

-- The U.S. military is sending seven freshwater producing ships to the region that can produce up to 630,000 gallons of fresh water daily.

Earlier in the day Secretary of State Colin Powell, aboard a flight from Washington en route to Bangkok, Thailand, told reporters that, with more than \$2 billion in official relief aid pledged, the problem was not having too little money but was getting immediate relief supplies distributed. [Furthering Relief Efforts for Victims Is Aim of Powell Visit]

At the start of a four-country tour Powell rebutted criticism of the U.S. relief effort as insufficient, describing the breadth and depth of the immediate U.S. response.

“In a period of four days, five days, I think a great deal was accomplished,” Powell said. “And the reason I emphasize this is I don’t think the American people should be given the impression that their president and their government was not hard at work on this from day one.”

With Powell in the in-flight briefing, USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios said surviving victims of the disaster were going into shock on seeing their families and neighborhoods destroyed.

“We’ve noticed when we see the people, large numbers of people in shock, the visits of very visible high-level people will restore a sense of hope that they are not being forgotten, they are not being lost,” Natsios said.

Powell and Natsios are scheduled to visit Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India.

A U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) spokesman, Navy Captain Roger Welch, says the massive military assistance effort to foster recovery from the tsunami disaster will continue until all the host nations no longer need U.S. help. [Military Will support Tsunami-Stricken Nations as Long as Needed]

As of the January 3 PACOM briefing, there were 12,600 Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard personnel in the affected region. Some 21 ships (including the Lincoln battle group) and 80 military aircraft (including more than six dozen helicopters) were supporting them.

Welch said 76,800 daily humanitarian rations have been delivered to Indonesia and another 32,000 units to the Maldives. He also said electricity is back on in some key Indonesian coastal areas, airport congestion is easing in the Sri Lankan airport in Colombo, and the relief operation in Thailand is "going great."

For additional information go to U.S. Response to Tsunami and Earthquake in Asia
http://usinfo.state.gov/sa/south_asia/tsunamis.html

U.S.-AUSTRALIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT NOW IN EFFECT, USTR SAYS

Trade pact is first between U.S. and developed country since 1988

The U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement, the first free trade agreement between the United States and a developed country since 1988, is now in effect, according to a press release issued by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) January 1.

"This is a 21st Century, state-of-the-art agreement that reflects the modern globalized economy," USTR Robert Zoellick said in the press release. "By opening trade in goods and services; eliminating barriers in the agricultural sector, investment, and government procurement; and increasing protection for intellectual property; the agreement will strengthen U.S.-Australian economic ties and has the potential to increase trade between our countries by billions of dollars."

Following is the text of the press release:

Office of The United States Trade Representative
 Executive Office of The President
 Washington, D.C. 20508
 January 1, 2005

Landmark U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement Goes Into Effect Today

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick announced that the United States-Australia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) entered into force today. The U.S.-Australia FTA is the first FTA between the United States and a developed country since the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement in 1988. More than 99 percent

of U.S. manufactured goods exports to Australia have immediately become duty free. Manufactured goods account for 93 percent of U.S. exports to Australia.

"As President Bush said when he signed the agreement, 'the U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement is a milestone in the history of our alliance,'" said Ambassador Zoellick. "This is the most significant immediate cut in industrial tariffs ever achieved in a U.S. free trade agreement, and manufacturers are the big winners. I am also pleased that U.S. workers, businesses, farmers, and consumers will now begin to enjoy the wide-ranging benefits of this landmark agreement. This is a 21st Century, state-of-the-art agreement that reflects the modern globalized economy. By opening trade in goods and services; eliminating barriers in the agricultural sector, investment, and government procurement; and increasing protection for intellectual property; the agreement will strengthen U.S.-Australian economic ties and has the potential to increase trade between our countries by billions of dollars." Australia is a large and growing trade and investment partner of the United States. Two-way annual goods and services trade is nearly \$29 billion, a 53-percent increase since 1994. Australia purchases more goods from the United States than from any other country, and the United States enjoys a bilateral goods and services trade surplus of \$9 billion.

Background:

Negotiations on the Australia-U.S. FTA began in March 2003, and President George W. Bush and Prime Minister John Howard have made it a priority for both countries to conclude the agreement. The negotiations were completed on February 8, 2004, and the agreement was signed by Ambassador Zoellick and Australian Minister Mark Vaile on May 18, 2004. President Bush signed the measure into law on August 3, 2004, after the U.S. Congress approved it a month earlier. Australia's Parliament approved implementing legislation in August 2004, and the Australian Government took further action to implement important intellectual property obligations in December 2004.

The FTA will open markets and streamline mutual access in intellectual property, services, government procurement, e-commerce, and investment. Australia is a key export market for important U.S. manufacturing sectors such as aircraft, autos and auto parts, machinery, computers and electronic products, chemicals, and wood and paper products. Each of the 50 U.S. states exports to Australia, and Australia is among the top 25 export

destinations for 48 of the 50 states. The leading states exporting to Australia are Washington, California, Illinois, Texas, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Florida.

The United States is working to open markets globally in the Doha World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations; regionally through APEC and the Free Trade Area (FTAA) of the Americas negotiations; and bilaterally, via FTAs. The Bush Administration has completed FTAs with 12 countries -- Jordan, Chile, Singapore, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Australia, Morocco, and Bahrain -- and negotiations are under way or about to begin with 12 more countries: Panama, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Thailand, the five nations of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), and soon the United Arab Emirates and Oman. New and pending FTA partners, taken together, would constitute America's third largest export market and the sixth largest economy in the world.

U.S. BANS USE OF NONDETECTABLE LANDMINES

Ban surpasses requirements of both international landmine treaties

The United States will no longer use landmines -- including both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines -- that cannot be detected with standard metal detectors commonly used by military and humanitarian deminers, the State Department said January 3.

"The United States action surpasses the detectability requirements of both international landmine treaties: the Amended Mines Protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to which the United States is a party, and the 'Ottawa Convention' which relates to anti-personnel mines," a department announcement said.

Following is the text of the announcement:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
January 3, 2005

United States Bans Non-Detectable Landmines

The United States has become the first major military power to terminate its use of any landmines that cannot be located with the standard metal detectors used by military and humanitarian deminers around the world.

"The U.S. landmine policy recognizes that non-detectable landmines pose a particularly insidious threat to humanitarian deminers as well as innocent civilians in a post-conflict environment," remarked Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Jr., the Special Representative of the President and Secretary of State for Mine Action who also serves as Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs. "Our action meets the first major goal in our new policy, which forswears the use by the United States of non-detectable mines now and all persistent mines after 2010."

This prohibition on the use of non-detectable landmines covers both anti-personnel as well as anti-vehicle mines. The United States action surpasses the detectability requirements of both international landmine treaties: the Amended Mines Protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to which the United States is a party, and the "Ottawa Convention" which relates to anti-personnel mines.

To learn more about United States landmine policy and the U.S. Humanitarian Mine Action Program, visit: www.state.gov/t/pm/wra.

Pleases Note: Most texts and transcript mentioned in the U.S. Mission Daily Bulletin are available via our homepage: www.usmission.ch

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